



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

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### Situation Report

#### Dam Failure Taum Sauk Hydroelectric Plant

December 14, 2005

1.5 Billion gallons of stored water was released via breach of the upper reservoir of the Taum Sauk Hydroelectric Plant owned and operated by Ameren UE of St. Louis. The water was released out of a gap in the dam on the northwest side of the retention facility. The flood waters inundated the Johnson Shut-Ins State Park operated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks. A family in the park was swept away by the flooding, but were all rescued and taken to various hospitals in critical condition.

The dam was built in 1963 and has been used as a 'peaking' unit to supplement energy sources as needed. The water flows down two mile-long tunnels within Proffit Mountain and turns hydroelectric turbine generators to produce electricity. In the overnight, the generators are used as pumps to push the water from the lower reservoir back up to the upper reservoir. The plant has operated safely for the past forty two years. The dam operation is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). It is licensed for fifty years at a time. The re-licensure for Taum Sauk started earlier this year.

The breach in the dam was reported by AmerenUE as starting at 5:24 a.m. 14 December 2005 and most of the reservoir drained between 5:30 a.m. and 5:40 a.m. The lower reservoir was overtopped by the flow of the east fork of the Black River. This dam is designed to be overtopped. The current level as of this writing was 750.8 feet, dam height is 750.0 feet, down from a high of 756 feet. However, City of Lesterville, as a precaution evacuated 100-150 people to higher ground.

Governor Blunt and Public Safety Director Mark James, met with response staff at the State Emergency Operations Center this morning and departed for an on-site inspection the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup>. State Agencies responded to requests for assistance from authorities on scene in Reynolds County. The following actions were taken by these agencies:

#### **Highway Patrol:**

Ten Missouri State Highway Patrolmen from Troop G (Willow Springs) and Troop E (Poplar Bluff) in coordination with Missouri Department of Transportation closed and monitored the following Highways – Highway N; Highway 21/49/72 and the major bridge crossing the Black River at Lesterville, Missouri.

MSHP responded to vehicles that had been swept off the roadway. No injuries reported.

Highway Patrol has set up a command post at Junction of 21/49/72 and Route N.

**Missouri Water Patrol:**

Twelve officers on-scene providing search and rescue for victims. Six boats were used in these operations. Missouri Water Patrol is standing by for further requests of assistance.

**Missouri Army National Guard:**

MONG is providing helicopter service for Governor Blunt's on-site survey. Two helicopters are available for further service. Weather is still a concern because of flight minimums.

**Missouri Department of Natural Resources:**

DNR Dam Safety program is enroute to the site and will do a combined inspection of the facility with FERC Inspectors being dispatched from Chicago, Illinois. Dam Safety program is based out of Rolla, Missouri.

DNR Environmental Emergency Response dispatched their regional coordinator from Cape Girardeau as well as another hazardous materials specialist. They are monitoring the situation from their response center in Jefferson City.

DNR Parks is reviewing the damages to its property in Johnson Shut-ins State Park which includes the Superintendent's residence, water treatment facility, park store and campgrounds. Park entrance is blocked by debris.

They are coordinating with SEMA for search and rescue air assets.

**Missouri Department of Conservation:**

MoDOC has dispatched a helicopter to the area for aerial surveillance. Area conservation agent is assisting local authorities in their response.

**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services:**

DHSS is assisting local authorities in dispatching additional ambulance services to the area to move patients to local hospitals. Ambulances has taken two injured to St. Louis for additional treatment.

**Missouri Department of Transportation:**

MoDOT is assisting Missouri Highway Patrol in road closings and debris removal. MoDOT is currently trying to reopen Highway N. Two staff members were assigned to the local command post to coordinate local assistance. In addition to road clearing, they are examining roadbeds and bridges for safety.

**Missouri Department of Agriculture:**

They have dispatched two inspectors to the area to assist the local agrarians in response.

**Voluntary Agencies:**

**Salvation Army:** One emergency canteen truck was dispatched from Cape Girardeau to Lesterville. One other vehicle is on-scene. Two personnel crews are on stand-by.

**American Red Cross:** One ERV (Emergency Response Vehicle) enroute to scene. ARC has opened two shelters and is looking to open a maximum of five.

**Reynolds County Citizen Corps:** Reynolds County Health Department has requested that anyone who wants additional information on people or needs assistance to call 573-648-2498 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**AmerenUE Company:**

AmerenUE has dispatched engineering and soils specialist to review the dam failure of Taum Sauk Hydroelectric Plant. They also dispatched an engineer to brief emergency officials at Jefferson City.

**Federal Agencies:**

FEMA – Homeland Security has been briefed by State Officials and has been appraised of the situation in Lesterville.

FAA – Has issued a Notice to Air Men (NOTAM).

**State Emergency Management Agency:**

SEMA has activated the State Emergency Operations Center to assist local response to the Taum Sauk Dam Failure. Area Coordinators from Cape Girardeau and Jefferson City have been dispatched to do a preliminary damage survey and to assist local efforts in recovery.

**Points of Contact:** To contact SEMA call 573-526-9100 (7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. M-F).  
For off-hours please contact the SEMA Duty Officer at 573-751-2748.